

ON A NEW KIND OF SURGICAL LITERATURE.

It is time that the eye of reprobation be more specifically directed toward a new and regrettable departure in surgical literature. Certain publications have appeared in the near past whose purpose appears to be the exploiting of the surgical and especially the operative skill of their authors without permitting us to judge with any degree of certainty for ourselves of the quality of those virtues. Proclaiming themselves greatly sired, these books are in no wise great. A peculiarity common to this group is that all of them cease to instruct too soon for it to be possible for the student following them to be able to carry out with assurance the operative procedures which in the hands of their authors were reported to have given such gratifying results. In this relation we are reminded of the circumstance of an old lady, long since gone to her reward—deservedly a great one for she was a famous cook. Her forte was the preparation of a most delectable dish known to early Californians as "Chancha Rollado." Many and importunate were the requests she received for the recipe, and gracious and detailed were her responses. Only when the dish prepared according to the given recipe came on the table it no longer was the ambrosial chancha rollado. The wise old lady had left something out of the recipe she gave away. If you wanted chancha rollado you still had to go to her house to get it—and her fame was more enduring than life itself. Had she charged us a dollar for the incomplete recipe the analogy between her work and that of the eminent authors referred to would have been complete.

S. N. I.

RESOLUTIONS ON CONTRACT PRACTICE.

Santa Cruz County Medical Society adopted, at one of its meetings, some resolutions on this subject and then sent a copy to every member with a request that he notify the secretary in writing whether he approved of them or not. It is a suggestion for other county units to consider and the resolutions follow:

Resolved, That no member of the Santa Cruz County Medical Society shall be permitted to render services to any member or members of a so-called Hospital Association, Corporation, Lodge, Society or other association, organization or institution whose purpose it is to provide medical or surgical services to its members at an agreed stipulation per member; provided, that the above classes shall not apply to industrial corporations, which, as a matter of humanity or emergency, need furnish medical or surgical aid to the bona fide employees appearing on their pay roll, nor to physical examinations of candidates for life insurance.

Do you approve of these resolutions? Answer YES or NO and notify the secretary at once. This will come up for final action at our next meeting.

THE COST OF LIVING; THEN AND NOW.

John Staats, a physician, wrote on the first page of his account book, "The twenty-ninth day of January one thousand eight hundred and twenty, we arrived in the town of Cato, Cayuga, New York." Dr. Staats changed his location quite as much as some physicians in California do; he went to Malta in May 1824; "Started from Malta May 8th and arrived at Lenox, Madison Co., the 14th, 1827"; in 1831 he went to Whitestown; in April 1832 he moved to Dearfield and Nov. 10th, 1832, moved to Geneva. Many of the entries in the book are quite curious and the charges are no less so. There are many entries like this: "Samuel Hunter. To medicines; (child)—0.12½c." Sel-don does an entry appear in so large a sum as \$1.00 and most of them are from 12½c to 37½c. His regular charge for a confinement seems to have been \$3.00, for we find a number of such entries as this: "Talmon Olmstead; To visit, deliv'g sps. 3.00" in which "sps" evidently means spouse, for in other places it is spelled out. But sometimes he altered his rates, for in one place he has entered a charge for delivering "spous" of twins, of \$6.00 and then, his conscience probably hurting him, he has charged it to \$5.00—a reduction on wholesale lots! On January 8th, 1821, there is an entry that is startling: "Lewis Traviss; to visit, attendance two days and three nights, medicines and delivering spous; \$5.50." The saddest thing in connection with the entry of this exorbitant charge is that it is one of the few not marked "paid"! But there were compensations, in those days; thus we find, in his expense account, "To making black vest 0.75; To making a white vest, 0.75." He bought a "large hog" for \$5.00 and paid for it by note. Another entry is "For one quart of whisky and a corn basket 0.50," which we must concede is not high. There are quite a few entries of whisky and the price varied from 12½c a quart up to \$1.50 for a gallon; this must have been very old and rare! There was evidently another doctor in the vicinity for we find that to "Doct. I. W. Squyer" he was indebted for "2 vol. Cullen's Materia Medica \$1.00" and for various items of medicines and "chunk bottles." Good Dr. Staats had a number of patients and he was a good collector, even though, he did move around quite a whole lot.

THE AMERICAN ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS—J. B. M.

In this fair month of May, in the good city of Washington, is to be held a most remarkable meeting for the purpose of conferring upon American surgeons (query: who—or what—is a surgeon?) a collection of letters indicative of some title, both title and string of letters being subjects for discussion. Martin (of *Surgery, Gynecology and Obstetrics*) and Murphy (of *Murphy's Clinics*)—or should it be Murphy and Martin?—started the game and have skilfully encouraged the ambition to belong to something and decorate one's name with letters. How are the honored ones